

A Chatteris Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbooks' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1897 08 30

Fen farmers interviewed, Chatteris, p3

1902 07 24

Chatteris, right in the heart of the breeders' country was the venue for the 1902 show of the Cambridgeshire Agricultural Society. It welcomed the society with open arms decorating its few streets as gaily as flags and bunting would allow. Visitors leaving the station passed under a triumphal arch of evergreens with the word 'Welcome' on the arrival side and 'Success to Agriculture' on the reverse. The number of entries and the attendance of the public were records and by mid-day 2,450 people had passed the turnstiles.

1902 10 02

Chatteris Friendly Society, p2 & 3

1904 12 31

Chatteris emigrants, p3

1905 06 19

A sensational report in the London papers that 'the body a woman upon whose body a variety of curious tattoo designs was found was discovered in the river at Cambridge' actually refers to a tragedy at Chatteris a fortnight ago. Two women of the tramp class were pulled from the river. One had tattoos of the crucifixion on her chest, a soldier, sailor and flags on her right arm and a fully-rigged ship, English and American flags, the letter M and a woman in tights on her left. Her left leg had a representation of a Highlander playing bagpipes 05 06 19a

1906 11 07

The Rector of Bluntisham told the court he found a window in the church had been broken and a contribution box taken from the wall. He knew there was a half-crown in it. The landlord of the Dog and Gun, Earith, said the defendant, a fine specimen of the Basuto race, had asked for a packet of Woodbines but could not afford a pint, and said he was going to St Ives. Fred Berridge, butcher of Chatteris, said he came to his shop and asked for threepennyworth of pieces and laid down a two-shilling piece. The man was arrested at the Old Hoops lodging house in Slade End but there was insufficient evidence to convict. 06 11 07a

1908 04 03

On leaving Stretham P.C. Pearce was presented with a handsome solid oak liqueur stand with three decanters, a cigar cabinet and a cribbage card with board. During his stay he had earned their respect – he was a policeman of the right sort and a good member of the cricket club. Having been stationed there for four years, he was leaving to take up new duties as sergeant at Chatteris. 08 04 03b

1911 04 21

Chatteris brigade were on their way to deal with a farm fire when they received a call to another at the premises of Messrs Price and Company in Railway Lane. It originated in store rooms where there was a large stock of matting, mats and materials used in the company's manufactures. In a very few minutes the whole premises were ablaze and the adjoining Cricketers public house surrounded by flames. There was danger of the range of dilapidated buildings in King Edward's Lane and the new schools becoming involved but with a good supply of water these were saved. 11 04 21g

1912 06 07

Chatteris Urban Council has decided that the houses in the town should be numbered and have already issued notices requesting the occupiers to number their properties. It is a very desirable improvement as great confusion is caused, especially where people of the same surname (of which

there are many) live in the same street. The town was very quiet recently as the Great Eastern Railway Company ran a special cheap day trip from Chatteris station to London and back for the Derby. This being the half-holiday day several shops took the opportunity of closing for the whole of the day 12 06 071

1912 07 12

Four labourers appeared in court for using a net at Somersham and taking a jack value one shilling. Sometimes the river had to be dammed and the Lower District Commissioners considered that fishing, such as spearing for eels, damaged the dams. There was a notice prohibiting angling and it had been publicly cried at Chatteris. Just one man, Michael Gray, had permission to use a rod and line in return for certain favours he performed for the Commissioners. The accused said they had fished the drain for 20 years river and knew nothing about a ban. They were each fined half-a-crown (about £12 at today's values) 12 07 12a

1912 10 18

Chatteris policeman offered bribe – 12 10 118d

1913 01 17 CIP

Chatteris doctors*,

1913 01 24 CIP

Chatteris picture palace opened. The Corn Exchange has been specially arranged and decorated and the subject of the pictures are changed every week

1913 03 14

Chatteris engineering works booming

1913 04 04 CIP

Congregational union – villages, Burwell, Castle Camps, Chatteris, Eversden, Fordham, Whittlesey, Balsham, West Wrattling. Cheveley, Shelford, Six Mile Bottom

1913 07 04

Chatteris mail cart driver death on line

1913 05 11

Chatteris pageant

1913 08 29

Chatteris hospital Sunday

1913 11 21

Chatteris child plays matches, death

1914 01

New Cambridgeshire Knight — One resident of Cambridgeshire figures amongst the New Year Honours, Mr. William Henry Clarke, of Bank House, Chatteris, receiving a knighthood. The new knight is well-known in the Isle of Ely, where he takes a prominent part in local government, being an Alderman of the County Council, Chairman of the County Finance Committee and of the Insurance Committee. He holds the position of steward to Lord Peckover, of Wisbech. A keen supporter of the Liberal Party, he has taken no small part in the work which has enabled the Hon. Neil Primrose to hold the seat for the North of the County (writes Free Lance).

1914 02 27

Cup Victory.—Histon footballers attained one of the goals of their ambition on Saturday last, when, for the first time in its history, the Cambs. Junior Cup found its way to Histon. The village was almost

deserted on Saturday afternoon, practically the whole population having gone to see the 'Stutes win the Cup, which they did by defeating St. Matthew's by the odd goal in three. Great excitement prevailed in the village on Saturday evening, and the players, who journeyed home by the seven o'clock train, were given an enthusiastic reception. The cup was taken in the midst of a cheering throng to the headquarters of the club, stops being made on the way at the residences of vice-presidents where short speeches were given. During the evening a number of supporters of the club, in which the juvenile element was very prominent, procured some oil, and a bonfire was lit on the green to celebrate the event. Now it is all over and the Cup rests quietly in the Institute, everyone is looking forward to the semi-final and final of the Chatteris Cup, which, it is hoped, will remain in Histon. 1914 02 27 CIPof

1914 05 15

A disastrous fire occurred at Stephen Parson's farm in Horselode Fen, Chatteris. A straw stack was struck by lightning and in a short time the stackyard was in flames. The Fire Brigade was hampered by the scarcity of water on these fen farms. Two of three buildings were destroyed. Great praise is due to the men on the farm who moved twelve fat beasts and some valuable horses into a grass field. & worked hard to save the most substantial buildings 14 05 15b

1914 05 29

The work of Suffrage Societies in the Eastern Federation has grown so much that reorganisation is needed. The Hon Sec for Cambridgeshire is Mrs Heitland, who with Miss Garlick as organiser is arranging meetings in North Cambs villages represented in Parliament by an anti-suffragist, the Hon. Neil Primrose. At Chatteris the Picture Palace was filled with other meetings in Whittlesey & Wisbech. Two ardent Cambridge suffragists, Miss Ida Freud, later lecture at Newnham College and Miss Smith of Hills Road, are much missed. Nine labourers were fined for disturbing a meeting at St Neots by shouting, dancing and singing. 14 05 29c

1914 10 30

Belgians – Waterbeach not help, Soham arrivals, Burwell, Bourn, Cottenham, Duxford, Gamlingay, Gt Eversden, Histon, Linton, Over, Sawston, Swavesey, Chatteris, Cheveley

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington

1915 09 10

Chatteris shops now closing 1-2pm for meal break

1919 01 15

Cambs Farm Labourers' strike, -The farm labourers of Chatteris are out on strike with the object of enforcing their demand of a minimum wage of 45s. per week. The trouble originated in some of employers attempting to lower the wages for the winter months from 42s. to 36s. - and the dissatisfaction occasionally led to a meeting of the union at which a resolution was adopted declaring that unless the farmers were prepared to grant a minimum wage of 45s, for all able-bodied men, the members would cease work. At a subsequent farmers' meeting, it was agreed to pay the following wages: Ordinary labourers £2, single horsekeepers £2 4s., casual labourers for threshing 9s. per-day and root labourers 8s. per day. This was published in the Press, but the workers met and said they did not recognise it as the proper medium of the farmers reply and decided to strike. Most of the Union men are out, and had been very peaceable. There has been no rowdyism, although a fair amount of passive picketing has been going on

1920 07 15

Agricultural Show at Chatteris, prize-winners

1920 06 30

Agricultural Show. — Owing to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease it has been decided not to hold any classes for cattle, sheep, pigs and goats at the Cambs. and Isle of Ely Agricultural Show at Chatteris on July 4th. The show, however, promises to be an interesting one notwithstanding, and in addition to the shire, hackney and hunter classes, there will be riding, harness, turnouts, and jumping classes, and the butter, cream cheese, and eggs competitions. There is also a record entry of implements.

1924 01 29

The driver of a steam wagon belonging to a Birkenhead haulage contractor said he was driving from Cambridge to Chatteris with a trailer attached. He left Cambridge about 7.45 pm and intended to get there some time in the morning. On the way he stopped to put water into the engine from a pond. The engine was in a bad state on account of their having had to use dirty ditch water, and it would not travel at more than three or four miles an hour.

1924 02 18

A meeting took place at Ely for the purpose of forming an Ely branch of the National Farmers Union. Mr Street Porter said a branch existed at Haddenham and if one was formed for Ely it would be much more convenient for his district. There were four others in the Isle of Ely – March, Wisbech, Chatteris and Whittlesey. There would be no doubt that members would derive benefits from it.

1931 05 15

The toll house on the Chatteris to Somersham road stands on the site of an ancient river called the West Water where a ferry existed until it dried up about 1765. It became a turnpike road & the tolls were still collected by Mr Dyson on behalf of the General Estates Company. Their obligation was to repair 60 yards of road; in 1925 it cost £10 and the income was about £750, a handsome profit. Now Chatteris council demanded rates on the toll-house. 31 05 15d e

1931 06 05

Farmers forgot their troubles and flocked to the annual Agricultural Show at Manor Park, Chatteris. Special trains, buses and private cars brought over 6,000 visitors and over 500 cars were parked in an adjoining meadow. In spite of the motor tractor the horse is by no means a back number in farming work and there were 78 entries in the Shire horse classes though Percherons and Suffolks showed an unexpected falling off. 31 06 05j

1931 07 17

The Isle of Ely NFU protested against the decision to fix the 1931 harvest wages at the same rate as last year: the cost of living had fallen, placing workers in a more favourable position but there had been a serious drop in the prices of agricultural products. The Manager at Chatteris station said the goods yard at the station and at Billups' Sidings would be improved following assurances that more traffic would be diverted from road transport to compensate for the outlay. 31 07 17l

1931 11 06

The keenness of competition between omnibus operators in the March area was apparent when the Traffic Commissioners heard applications for bus licences. The March Motor Co. operated services to Chatteris carrying 1,826 passengers a week. But the Railway Company objected saying they were the only operator to keep to a timetable. Their Benwick service averaged 350 on the two days a week that it ran. It had begun in 1922, but lapsed for some years until resumed in October 1930. W. Spriggs of Parson Drove had one of his buses stopped by police for being overcrowded and it had twice broken down. 31 11 06c

1934 12 20

Cambridge and March continue to spread out along the main thoroughfares and 'ribbon development' has already disfigured roads in Quy, Girton, Harston and Chatteris. The County Council is primarily a

road authority and its objection is from the traffic standpoint rather than from the aesthetic point of view. To retain the beauty of the countryside frontage control much be applied to all roads, the Cambridge Council for the Preservation of Rural England urged. 34 12 20

1935 06 26

The Parliamentary Land Drainage Committee discussed the prospects of flooding in Middle Level. Land 20 feet above the normal height of spring tides should be subject to a drainage tax. This would bring in much of March and three-quarters of Whittlesey but Doddington and most of Chatteris would be exempt. In the past churches had been inundated and parishioners climbed the towers to get out of the water. People went from Lincolnshire by boat to take food to the folks in Terrington. 35 06 26 & a

1935 12 11

The managers of Coveney Church of England School are not willing for it to be converted into a junior mixed and infants' school. But it would detrimental to the children if they were deprived of the facilities of a senior school and if parents wanted to send their children to Ely there was nothing to stop them, councillors heard. A site for the new senior girls' school in Downham Road could be bought for £1,700 which was less than its commercial value. The Board of Education had objected to plans for the new senior school at Chatteris saying it should be a two-storey building or there would not be enough space for physical training and organised games. 35 12 11

1936 01 10

Chatteris Masonic Ladies night held at University Arms – 36 01 10

1936 04 22

The bridges over the Bedford Rivers at Sutton Gault were unable to carry the weight of traffic now using them and were beyond the capacity of the Ouse Catchment Board to repair. They should be replaced by the County Council like the Honeysome Bridge near Chatteris station. But this would cost £8,000 and in times of flood the road between the two bridges would be underwater. To make a good job there would have to be a viaduct and the area did not warrant that expenditure, an Inspector was told. 36 04 22c & d photo 36 04 23a

1936 11 18

Ely Urban and Rural District Councils had a joint isolation hospital which was originally given as a private gift by Mr Cutlack and his wife. However the County Council had decided to include Chatteris UDC as it was too small to provide a hospital of its own. But Chatteris councillors did not want it and objected to having to pay towards its support. They preferred to treat patients in their own home. Anyway it was not a proper hospital: it had no consultant staff and was no different to an ordinary nursing home. 36 11 18 & a

1936 12 03

A family feud between van dwellers at Turf Fen, Chatteris, had a sequel in court. They had a grievance over some potatoes which resulted in a 'rare tussle' during which one man was hit on the head with a spade causing him to run to his van, load his guns and fire into the air to frighten his attackers. But some of the shot penetrated their van just missing three children. Police found 30 pellet holes in the side. The assault case was dismissed and he was fined £2 for firing the gun and £1 towards repairs. 36 12 03

1936 12 04

Isle of Ely Highways Committee discussed various road improvements. There may be a bypass at Chatteris from Carters Bridge to link up with Warboys Road but this was a huge scheme. A bottleneck on the Lynn Road north of Ely was caused by a cottage standing close to the road: this could be demolished with a new home built further back. In Stretham the Cambridge Road between the new council houses should be widened with an island at the junction of Wilburton Road. They were faced with this monstrous expenditure because of the foolish position in which the houses had been built. 36 12 04 & a

1937 01 01

A disastrous blaze broke out in a boiler house in the pig yard at Colony Farm, Manea. Despite the efforts of the Brigade the flames had a good hold and spread quickly to adjacent buildings in which 150 pigs were housed. Forty of the animals were liberated but the rest perished in the intense heat. The buildings, as well as a straw stack, were razed to the ground. Occupants of the George Hotel Chatteris were also awakened by the sound of the fire alarm when a blaze broke out in the kitchen. Its timely discovery allowed staff to quell the flames and prevent serious damage 37 01 01

1937 06 10

The reconstruction of four bridges, Popeleys Bridge (Wisbech), Slade Lode Bridge (Chatteris), Brands Bridge and Benwick Bridge will be deferred as contractors cannot obtain the necessary steel for the work. But estimates the reconstruction of the road between Littleport Bridge and Brandon Creek were accepted by the Isle of Ely council. An application by Stretham Parish Council for a speed limit through the village and the widening of the Fordham Road near Green End was granted. 37 06 10b

1937 09 16

The Isle of Ely County Council considered the construction of a new road eliminating the bends between Chatteris and Warboys Road, together with the widening of the south side of the Haddenham-Earith Road to include the filling-in of the parish pond. But tenders for £440 to improve the conveniences at Manea School seemed a gross extravagance when there were only 200 children on the books. At Manea they could build a bungalow for that price. Some classes were having to be held on the stairs at March High School as there was no room left in the cloakroom, extensions should be started as soon as possible 37 09 16a

1938 06 29

Several towns in the Isle of Ely were 'raided' by bombers in the early hours. There was no cause for alarm, because the raid was nothing more than an experiment to test the effectiveness of air raid precautions. Two bombers from Marham left the aerodrome to spot the black-out area in Whittlesey, March, Chatteris & Wisbech. March and Chatteris were in complete darkness and it was an eerie sight to see the chain of lights representing the brickyards, being switched on and off during the flight. But some motorists would not comply with the requests of air wardens to dim their lights. 38 06 29

1939 02 04

The new Cromwell School at Chatteris will accommodate 640 senior pupils from an area including Benwick, Manea & Witcham and be a recreational centre for young people and adults. It is one of the most modern schools with a separate department for boys and girls each with a hall equipped with a complete range of Swedish gymnastic apparatus. There are 'practical rooms' where boys will be taught handicrafts and girls housecraft and a clinic for medical inspection and dental treatment 39 02 04

1939 02 09

Ralph Wright, Ely RAF Volunteer Reserve Pilot, does stunting over Ely, then crashes and killed at Chatteris – 39 02 06

1939 02 10

Inquest on pilot Wright of Ely, who crashed at Chatteris – 39 02 10

1939 05 05

The Ely and Chatteris area would receive about 9,000 evacuees in three days, the W.V.S. was told. Accommodation offered for the children far exceeded the number that would be billeted, but there was not sufficient accommodation for adults. The first batch of evacuees would arrive at Ely at 1.05pm, brining 1,000 and the second train at 5.35 and the W.V.S. could escort them to their billets.

The receiving stations in Ely would be Silver Street and Broad Street schools. Food would be provided but the authorities did not have the means to prepare or serve it 39 05 05 & a

1940 01 26

Lightweight Meets Heavyweight. —Eric Boon, of Chatteris, when driving his car at the crossroads, Haddenham, at mid-day on Monday, collided with Mr. H. T. Setchell's motor lorry. It is reported that the lightweight was the loser in the encounter, as Boon's car was more damaged than the lorry. Both vehicles were, however, able to proceed on their way, and neither of the drivers was injured

1940 03 08

High Sheriff.—Sheriffs for the year were appointed by the King at Buckingham Palace on Thursday. For Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, Mr. Arthur Herbert Carter, of Tydd St. Giles Wisbech, was appointed. Mr. Carter, who farms a large acreage in the north of the county and in Lincolnshire, has been a member of the Isle of Ely County Council several years, and was appointed alderman about four years ago. He is one of three Isle men nominated for this honour in November last. The other two were Mr. J. W. H. Ollard, of Wisbech and Mr. L. Childs of Chatteris.

1950 06 23

Traffic using the Chatteris-Mepal road has for sometime past unknowingly had a miraculous escape from being involved in a serious accident on the Chatteris side of the bridge over the Old Bedford River. The subsoil under the metal road had completely subsided leaving only one thickness of road metal to prevent traffic from dropping into a large cavity about eight feet deep, which extends to almost half the width of the road. It might have collapsed at any moment

1950 08 21

A list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest in Chatteris has been issued. These buildings must not be demolished or altered in any way without giving notice. The list includes the Parish church, the council offices, the Cross Keys and Red Lion public houses and a number of private residences including the Manor House in Wenny Road, currently unoccupied.

1957 01 02

Lieut-Col. John G.A. Beckett, former Commanding Officer of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, has been awarded the O.B.E. in the New Year Honour's List. He commanded a company during the battle at Singapore and was a prisoner-of-war until the end of hostilities. He rejoined in 1947 & was in charge of 'Q' (Ely and Chatteris) Battery before becoming C.O. in 1952. 57 01 02

1957 01 11

The Middle Level barrier bank on the north side of Mepal Bridge is to be lowered by three feet to improve visibility for traffic approaching from Chatteris, following a fatal accident last year. In the event of a high flood there would be ample time to construct a sandbag wall on the lowered portion of the bank, the River Board was told. 57 01 11

1958 10 01

Ten years ago Eastern Electricity's Fens sub-area had been faced with a back-log of work. Some 171 villages and about 4,000 farms had been without a mains supply – but now all had been connected. They had enlarged sub-stations at Bassingbourn, Histon, Chatteris and March and erected new overhead power lines. There was an increasing interest in floor warming equipment which was very much a 'coming thing' and improvements had been made in meter reading. 58 10 01

1961 03 09

The Phantoms rock and roll group have signed an exclusive contract with Palette Records. The group comprises Ken Leverington, David Cooke and Cliff Gentle, of Cambridge, on guitars, Freddie Smart, a Chatteris hairdresser on drums and Johnny Cullen of Bottisham as vocalist. They had been playing together for six months when two undergraduates, both songwriters, heard them at a dance. They

learned 10 new numbers in three weeks and recorded a demonstration disc. Now 'Phantom Guitar' is to be released through Pye in April 61 03 09

1961 06 30

Mrs Anita Brown of Soham has an unusual hobby – sign writing. Her largest work is now at Chatteris advertising the Traction Engine Rally. It is on a six by four feet piece of hardboard and features a detailed picture of a traction engine painted in Chinese lacquer. A gifted artist, she also tints photographs professionally, enjoys modelling clay and is keen on pottery. When Soham Women's Institute entered the Cambridgeshire Federation's scrap book competition, Anita illustrated their book and designed the cover 61 06 30

1963 03 15

The battle of the fens is on with councils in direct competition with each other in efforts to attract more light industry and halt the migration of their populations. Chatteris has a good labour force but every day 200 women leave to work in factories around Cambridge. March has a large railway marshalling yard employing 1,500 people and wants industry in case it is reduced in size. Ramsey are trying to get firms from Middlesex, bringing 500 employees into the town. It has little to attract them but hope that 'bingo and the cinemas' will be enough amusement until it can grow. 63 03 15

1963 03 27

The Beeching report on the future of British Railways suggests the closing down of 19 stations in the Cambridge area – including three serving the main towns of Haverhill, Saffron Walden and St Ives. There would be the complete withdrawal of passenger services from branch lines, Cambridge-March, Gt Shelford-Marks Tey, Audley End & Bartlow lines. Amongst the village stations closed to passenger traffic would be Histon, Wimblington and Chatteris, Bartlow, Pampisford and Linton together with Soham and Fordham. Services from Black Bank would also cease 63 03 27 & a

1963 04 05

Chatteris Market Hill Garden and shelter receives award – 63 04 05

1963 04 04

The shock of Dr Beeching's plans to close Chatteris railway station and the St Ives loop-line connecting them with Cambridge and March is over. But Chatteris councillors' battle to maintain the line is hotting-up. It would hit many residents who travel to work in Cambridge each day or visit Addenbrooke's Hospital. If the station closes there would be more traffic on the roads which are already congested and make the town isolated, they claim. 63 04 04

1963 04 06

Civic Trust awards for West Wrattling windmill, Fisons Pest Control, Bradwell's Court and Chatteris market hill garden – 63 04 06b

1963 05 09

Chatteris needs town development scheme to encourage industry – 63 05 09

1963 12 07

Paradise Farm, Mepal, has been presented to the Ministry of Agriculture by Ald Arthur Rickwood, the Chatteris farmer. It is due to have new buildings including laboratories used for research work. The fens have been rich farming land for 200 years but many farmers are concerned at the shrinkage of peat. The wastage in some areas amounts to an inch a year, a colossal amount over a long period. Farming techniques are changing all the time and it was important to solve the problems. 63 12 07

1963 12 12

A police demonstration on the Mepal-Chatteris road showed the unerring accuracy of the radar speed meter, a piece of equipment costing £600 (about £10,600 today). It directs a beam at an angle across the road which records vehicle speeds on the meter. It is as accurate as any other scientific instrument.

Some drivers say the use of radar is unsporting but police have to clear up the messy and tragic results of thousands of accidents each year 63 12 12c

1964 04 30

The 'Town Café' in High Street, Soham is a new venture based in a former general stores. It comprises a restaurant at the rear of the premises and a coffee bar at the front. They have been granted a music licence so that a juke box can be installed in the coffee bar. The owner also owns a café at Chatteris. 64 04 30c

1964 05 13

Isle wants development for Wisbech, March and Chatteris – 64 05 13c

1964 07 22

The Isle of Ely will lose one of its most ancient offices – that of Custos Rotulorum – when the county is amalgamated with Cambridgeshire next April. The office dates back to about 1460 and is responsible for the records of the county and quarter sessions. The present holder is Ald Leonard Childs of Chatteris who was appointed by the King in 1952. In Cambridgeshire the office is held by the Lord Lieutenant, Ald R.H. Parker 64 07 22a

1964 10 02

Coote and Warren, the coal merchants, have used Somersham as a coal depot ever since the station opened in 1850. But they have still not been informed by British Railways that it is to be closed on December 28th. Few other businesses will be affected. Norman's, the general stores, say supplies went to Chatteris by rail before coming in by road and fruit growers mostly have their own lorries. Stationmaster George Hlubek does not know where he will be transferred whilst Bert Rivers, who is now three years over retirement age, will stay on as a passenger porter 64 10 02

1965 03 17

Chatteris retains Dickensian atmosphere – development report – 65 03 17a, c

1968 01 31

Chatteris in bid to attract Hovertrain work – 68 01 31

1976 05 29

Dave "Boy" Green, seen in the fens as a reincarnation of their living legend, Eric "Golden Boy" Boon seeks the British title at the Royal Albert Hall. His ferocious fists have left a trail of 15 beaten bodies on his way to the title fight against Joey Singleton. It is fighter against boxer, the punches of the slugger from the country against the wits of the artful dodger from the city. When the bell goes he will storm forward like a runaway thresher throwing out punches from all angles, punches launched from awesome shoulders with murderous momentum – ten stone of terror on the rampage. He first put on gloves then years ago when he went to the local amateur boxing club in Chatteris

1976 06 03

Dave "Boy" Green returned in triumph to his home town of Chatteris parading the Lonsdale Belt through the streets in a horse and cart after his British light-welterweight win against Joey Singleton. A crowd of about 700 fans greeted him as he arrived at a civic reception at Cromwell Community College – his old school. He plans to continue his work at a Southery carrot-packing plant & stick to his planned route towards an eventual blockbuster showdown with Britain's world welterweight champion, John H. Stracey.

1977 03 28

Motorists were caught on the hop today as snow spread across almost all of East Anglia. The A45 was blocked near Newmarket when a tanker crashed at the Red Lodge petrol pumps & an unladen tanker overturned near the Four Went Ways. The Chatteris to Ely road was almost blocked & at Haddenham a baker's van slithered across the road. Police say there have been inundated with reports of hold-ups

and accidents. Villagers at Hardwick were still without electricity at lunchtime, 11 hours after power went off. Parts of Papworth and Eltisley are also without supplies.

1977 04

The volcano of violence that is Dave “Boy” Green erupted in an elemental awesome display of action fighting at Wembley. Proud Union Jack bearer, John H. Stracey, had as much chance as the citizens of Pompeii. Green, a threshing machine with eyes blazing like headlights swarmed all over him, punching him to a standstill. Hooks to the body and muckspreader rights to the head exploded from him as he poured on the pace and the Londoner capitulated to the remorseless punishment of the Chatteris champion’s bombing punches.

1979 05 18

Farmers were weighting up the damage caused by the worst fen blow for several years. Fierce winds whipped up the light soil but they were highly localised. The worst affected areas were at Prickwillow, Stretham, Coveney & Chatteris where there were dust clouds all around but fortunately a cloudburst dampened the fields after an hour’s blowing. Elsewhere orchards took a bad buffeting. A fallen tree blocked the Harlton to Haslingfield road for several hours and another fell at Cottenham. An invalid carriage was blown from the A14 at Papworth and two motorcycles collided in the strong winds.

1979 06 29

The first three factories to be built in a town by the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas have been opened in Wisbech. They will be followed by others at Littleport, Ramsey, Chatteris and March. The policy had been to build them in truly rural areas but they decided to give special help to small towns where job opportunities were very limited. MP Clement Freud said it is helping people with cottage industries to take a stride forward; they cannot afford the overheads of a modern and efficient factory but this offers them units at a very good rent and will help them grow.

1980 12 01

Soham Comrades’ Band is the new brass band champion of Cambridge, snatching the title from Littleport. Chatteris Town Band came third. Each had to play a march, a hymn and one other work. In the contest for small bands Waterbeach took the first prize, Wicken was second, followed by Cottenham, Haddenham and Burwell. Cottenham took the Cook trophy for the highest marks in the march with the Ernie Avery memorial trophy for the highest marks in the hymn going to Waterbeach.

80 12 01

1981 04 27

Torrential rain lashed Huntingdonshire over the weekend isolating villages and sealing off roads. Villagers at Alconbury were placed on a ‘red alert’ and told to move all valuable possessions up to the first floor of their homes. Police frogmen stood by to help people trapped by the water and ferry food to stranded homes. At Chatteris the wind brought down a derelict cottage in the High Street, scattering rubble across the road. 81 04 27a

1984 08 17

Chris Dennis, one of the founder-members of Pink Floyd – Cambridge’s main claim to pop fame – has opened a studio in Chatteris to cater for young and not very rich bands. Chris, who was in the original line-up before they started making records and becoming famous, runs Metronome Music which is designed for local bands who want to record demo tapes professionally. He supplies all the equipment required, helps with the production and charges £3 an hour. 84 08 17 p9

1984 10 19

Ken Wallis, the aviator who invented James Bond’s “Little Nellie”, has notched up two world records at RAY Wyton. Following a measured course along the 16ft drain at Chatteris he attained a speed of 117.8 mph – beating the previous record held by an American by almost 10 mph. He now holds 15 of the 16 world records associated with an autogyro. The Wallis family are no strangers to Cambridge.

In 1910 his father took their Wallbro monoplane to a field near Fulbourn for a maiden flight. But after a couple of hops and a bump they called it a day. Now Ken hopes to arrange a commemoration to mark his father's efforts. 84 10 19 p18

1986 05 29

Pop bands can't complain about a shortage of recording studios. Heading the list is Spaceward based at Stretham which has been frequented by an impressive array of stars including the Stranglers, who are currently recording their new album there. The 24-track studio uses an extensive range of highly sophisticated equipment and charges £450 a day. On a more modest scale are Kite Studio in Cambridge, Jupiter Recording Studio in Ickleton and Metronome Music in Chatteris which is run by Chris Dennis one of the founder members of Pink Floyd 86 05 29a

1988 07 25

A little bakery tucked away behind a transport café deep in the fens at Chatteris is making a cake for the Queen Mother's 88th birthday. It is the latest in a long line of celebration cakes produced by Walter and Raymond Potter for the Royal household, including a massive five-tier one for the marriage of Charles and Diana in 1981. Now they are hoping for a visit from the Queen Mother and Princess Diana – "It would be a marvellous boost for us and the town of Chatteris", they say 88 07 25a

1990 01 16

Cambridge's planning chief fears for the future if some of the high-tech and other commercial development, which is clamouring to start up in the city, cannot be diverted to other parts of the county. Officials are preparing an action plan based on a report by University land experts. Ely, Haverhill, Chatteris and March are suffering from a depressed economy and would benefit from the establishment of firms sent from Cambridge 90 01 16a